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[For a discussion of how the principle of lineality is reflected in the kinship system as a whole, see Category 601.]

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

a repayment, but this act was also a display of generosity toward one of less wealth and thus established a moral obligation that could be converted later into support for one's opinions in council. A man of property gained position within his band by sharing generously with those less fortunate than himself, and gained stature within the tribe by feasting members of other bands and the giving of gifts to the leaders of other bands. *Generosity was a major requisite for prestige and status.*

In summary, resources were unowned, food and materials were open equally to all according to his energy and ability. Food became the property of the one who took it, to be shared first with his family, then with others to whom he might be obligated and with the unfortunate. In times of famine, food became band property to be shared by all.

Horses and other material goods were individually owned and were bought and sold, borrowed and given. Personal dreams, experiences, exploits and the symbols of these were also personal property and could be transferred by one person to another in exchange for other goods.

The distribution system fostered individual gain and accumulation. The consumption system countered this by imposing social sanctions that rewarded charity and generosity with prestige and status. This force will be examined further.

Social Organization

A child born to Blackfeet parents began early to learn the patterns of social interaction. He was first of all a member of a household—the occupants of a single tepee—which included the parents, unmarried brothers and sisters, and perhaps one or two other relatives as well, such as a grandparent, a maiden aunt, or other wives of the household head.

As the child grew older it learned that its family was the minimal economic unit of the Blackfeet society. The father was the decision maker, the one responsible for the protection and good behavior of its members; the first wife was the owner of the tepee, responsible for the other wives if any, for the care of the children, maintenance of the tepee and other duties within the women's realm. The child learned too about other kinsmen, that he had important relatives on both sides of the family—in other words, kin were recognized bilaterally.

As acquaintances were made beyond the household, he or she learned that there were other families that regularly lived near and traveled with one's own. These were members of the band, the day in and day out hunting and gathering group that was the basic economic and political unit of the Blackfeet. It was the band that moved according to the requirements of the yearly round, camped alone through the winter, joined with other bands in the summer for the tribal hunt. The child learned the band name and identified with it: he was a child of his parents and one of the Small Robes, Skunks, Lone Eaters or whatever his band might be (see Grinnell 1907:208–210 for one listing of band names). Over the years he learned too that the people who gathered during the summer hunt were fellow Piegan, and that among other people encountered on occasion were some who spoke his language, did things his way, were Blackfeet of the other divisions—the